Speed Post Services

*238. SHRI K.B. KRISHNA MURTHY: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether speed post services recorded largest revenue share in the business mail segment during the year 2001 -02;

(b) how many stations are presently covered by the speed post network in the country;

(c) whether air connectivity is the prime requisite for setting up a speed post centre; and

(d) what are the plans to add the industrial towns and commercial/ trading urban areas, which have no air connectivity, to the speed post network?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI ARUN SHOURIE): (a) Speed Post has generated revenue to the tune of Rs. 196.53 crore during the year 2001 -2002, which is 49.67% of total revenue of Rs. 395.64 crores generated from premium products of Business Development Directorate.

(b) 140 stations are on the national speed post network and 746 stations are on the State speed post network.

(c) No, Sir. It is one of the factors that helps.

(d) Speed Post is a premium product and is run on commercial considerations. Expansion of this network is an on going process depending on market situation, assessment of the need, anticipated revenue and transport network.

Decline in Foodgrains Stock

*239. SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI:
SHRIMATI KUM KUM RAI:

Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether foodgrains stock has dropped below the 50 million tonne mark;

(b) whether it is expected to further dwindle to 38 million tonne in the next two months;

(c) whether this would be the lowest in the last three years;

(d) if so, the reasons therefor;

(e) the procurement made, so far;

(f) to what extent it is short of target; and

(g) the efforts being made to improve the food stocks during the year 2003-04?

THE MINISTER OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHARADYADAV): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

(e) The procurement of foodgrains during 2002-2003 (upto 28.2.03) is as under:-

Commodity	Quantity
Wheat (Rabi)	190.29 lakh tonnes
Rice (Kharif)	131.36 lakh tonnes
(including paddy in terms of rice)	

(f) and (g) The present stocks of foodgrains in the Central Pool are in excess of the buffer norms.

Demands of Indian Sugar Mills Association

*240. SHRIJ. CHITHARANJAN:
SHRI V.V. RAGHAVAN:

Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Indian Sugar Mills Association has demanded tax concessions and a two-year tax holiday in order to help the Sugar Mills